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SUBJECT: AT NATO SUMMIT AND BEYOND, UK FOCUS WILL BE ON  
INCREASED BURDENSARING

REF: A) LONDON 717 B) LONDON 744

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Greg Berry for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary: An entrenched financial crisis at home and low, stagnant poll numbers for the Labour Party (ref A) will make it highly unlikely that the UK will announce any large increases for NATO programs at the April 3-4 Strasbourg/Kehl Summit, according to MOD and FCO sources. In general, the UK supports U.S. goals for summit deliverables, from Afghanistan to handling Russia to NATO reform, but HMG will want the cost of success to be spread more broadly. End Summary.

Afghanistan  
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¶2. (C/NF) HMG is relieved that it has not been asked for specific, large increases in resources or troops for southern Afghanistan to complement U.S. augmentation in RC-S. MOD Joint Commitments Director Greg Lupton said that the financial crisis and exchange rate impact on sterling are making it very difficult for the UK to maintain its current international posture, let alone consider significant increases. He underlined that there would not be a "one-for-one re-posting" of the approximately 4,000 troops departing from Iraq this summer to Afghanistan.

¶3. (C/NF) HMG agrees with the U.S. view that the Summit is critical to coordinating ISAF strategy. FCO Afghanistan Director Matthew Lodge said that the UK's goal is to come out of the Summit with an effective command and control strategy, comprehensive plans for capitalizing on the capabilities represented by the increase in U.S. military personnel, and discussions on efficiencies of structures, such as more military control over PRTs in the south, and proposals for coordinating British civilian elements in Helmand. Lodge said that FS Miliband is open to new constructs; HMG should not be tied to British "ownership" of particular districts or provinces at the expense of overall mission success. Lodge and Hutton emphasized that the UK is supportive of the U.S. push for Coalition partners to contribute additional funding for sustainment of the expanded Afghan National Army (ANA), and sees this as part of a "political surge," to include strategies for tackling governance and corruption issues in Kabul and within provincial governments.

¶4. (C/NF) Burdensharing will be the theme on which British principals will focus at the Summit, according to Lodge and Lupton. Both said that with the release of the U.S. strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, the UK will soon likely release the conclusions of its own review. Lupton said that while

the UK strategy may leave open the possibility of small, targeted increases in troop strength for Afghanistan, such as for the elections, it was unlikely that the Summit would include any UK commitment for large troop increases. Both Lupton and Lodge said that a more focused and coordinated strategic communications plan was also needed for NATO/ISAF, both to explain the mission to Afghanis and to bolster public (taxpayer) support back home.

KFOR

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15. (C/NF) HMG agrees that the unpredictable security situation in Kosovo warrants a "robust" KFOR presence, properly resourced and staffed to ensure the continued success of an independent Kosovo (ref B). According to FCO NATO Team Leader Omar Daair, the recent UK decision to draw down its presence in KFOR was taken after SACEUR suggested that the "type and size" of the British military component was no longer required. The UK's support for the French position on reviewing the KFOR posture reflects only a need to "establish benchmarks and plans for future requirements" for KFOR's mission, according to Daair. He said KFOR's posture should only be adjusted after careful consideration of the many conditions influencing the security situation in Kosovo, but especially the efficacy of the EULEX mission and its ability to help maintain stability.

NATO/Russia

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16. (C/NF) The U.S. push to revitalize the NATO-Russia

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Council was welcomed by the UK, and the NRC is seen in London as a valuable tool for advancing and improving multilateral relations with Moscow. Overall however, UK-Russia bilateral tensions relating to the Litvinenko murder continue, and HMG sees recent Russian foreign policy actions as a "continuum" in Moscow's goal to maintain influence in its "near abroad," and to deter western influence, especially NATO enlargement. The UK therefore reads the military action in Georgia as part of a pattern - exemplified by recent Russian policy on CFE, Missile Defense and other multilateral initiatives - in implementation of the same strategy. The UK, like the United States, will still press Moscow to comply with its responsibilities as a European neighbor, particularly regarding the breakaway regions of Georgia. According to FCO Russia Office Team Leader Nick Latta, the UK wants to work with Russia on areas of common interest - Afghanistan, counter-piracy and the environment as examples - but remain firm with Russia on issues such as territorial integrity and the right of nations to join international security organizations of their own choosing.

17. (C/NF) Like the U.S., HMG has "read with interest" President Medvedev's security white paper, but will not allow discussions on the Russian ideas to undermine existing security arrangements in Europe, such as OSCE and NATO. Latta pointed out that a good indicator of Russian views on NATO issues would likely emerge from the bilateral conversations Medvedev has with both President Obama and PM Brown on the margins of the London G-20.

Enlargement

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18. (C/NF) The UK will continue to work with Ukraine and Georgia to help those countries implement the reforms and meet standards required of NATO partners, Daair said. He noted it was unlikely the shared UK/U.S. goal of MAP for both would be realized any time soon, given French/German intransigence, but there was much that could be done within existing parameters - for instance, Partnership for Peace exercises which would benefit both aspiring and existing NATO members (and again, spread the funding burden).

## French Reintegration

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¶9. (C/NF) Now that the UK is over its initial, slight neuralgia over what cost the French would exact for reintegration in terms of NATO commands at British cost, both the MOD and FCO are enthusiastic about the prospects for NATO's future represented by the new French posture. Returning to the burdensharing focus, NATO/EU policy director at the MOD Andrew Mathewson said that the French will play a major role in NATO's "global vision" and are already making strong contributions in Afghanistan, which he hoped would be enhanced. He predicted more French participation in areas such as counter-piracy and the helicopter trust fund, and praised French initiatives such as use of gendarmerie for police training (acknowledging that some work needs to be done to convince the French to keep this under the NATO/ISAF umbrella).

## Institutional Issues

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¶10. (C/NF) Mathewson also pointed out that the French are coming to the table with some interesting, creative ideas on reforming, streamlining and in general making more efficient NATO's internal workings as well as its relations with other security organizations such as ESDP, to address new threats. The UK looks forward to working with the U.S. on finishing the Declaration on Alliance Security in time for Strasbourg and following on with the NATO Strategic Concept by the 2010 summit. The documents should serve in part as "blueprints," according to Daair, to guide efforts over the coming year to strengthen the organization.

## Comment

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¶11. (C/NF) All of the UK priorities for the Summit, from the Afghanistan operation to long term institutional reform, have a resource/burdensharing aspect. For Prime Minister Brown, whose personal and party poll ratings are at an all time low

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(ref A), the key to the UK remaining a valued NATO ally will be convincing his public that Britain is not shouldering an unfair portion of the burden, from blood spilled and money spent on the Helmand battlefields to resources allocated to improve NATO capabilities and readiness. Any requests for significantly higher contributions from empty British coffers will likely be met by pleas to look elsewhere in the Alliance.

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